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# Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

*Provisional*

**4115**th Meeting

Tuesday, 21 March 2000, 3 p.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Chowdhury | (Bangladesh) |
| *Members*: | Argentina | Mr. Cappagli |
| | Canada | Mr. Lalani |
| | China | Mr. Chen Xu |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Jamaica | Mr. Ward |
| | Malaysia | Mr. Mohammad Kamal |
| | Mali | Mr. Oumar |
| | Namibia | Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Hamer |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Granovsky |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Ben Mustapha |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Yel'chenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Harrison |
| | United States of America | Mr. Minton |

## Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/214)

00-35257 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border**

**Interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/214)**

**The President:** I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Tajikistan, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President:** In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/2000/214.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I give him the floor.

**Mr. Annabi**: The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan that you just mentioned, Sir, describes developments in Tajikistan since last November.

Apart from the presidential election, which was held on 6 November last year, the key event during the reporting period was the holding of elections to the newly established Assembly of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament, on 27 February. According to the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda, the national elections commission, the ruling People's Democratic Party won a majority of seats, followed by the Communist Party. The Islamic Revival Party won two seats. On 12 March, run-off elections were held in 12 constituencies where no candidate had received the majority of the vote. According to the central electoral Commission, seven were won by the ruling People's Democratic Party and three by candidates running as independents. The results in the remaining two constituencies, both of which are in Gorniy Badakshan in the south-east, have not yet been announced. On 16 March, the central electoral Commission established a special commission to examine the results of the second round of voting in these two constituencies.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) jointly monitored the election. The United Nations-OSCE Joint Electoral Observation Mission noted the significance of the inclusion of former warring parties and others in the electoral process and the fact that Tajikistan had held its first-ever multiparty election in an atmosphere free from violence.

The Joint Electoral Observation Mission, however, also pointed out that the electoral legislation had failed to ensure the independence of the election administration commission, and that the transparency of the process did not meet minimum standards. The observers also reported widespread proxy voting and voting without proper identification.

Despite its shortcomings, the parliamentary election is the final act in the transition period foreseen under the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, which was signed by President Rakhmonov and the United Tajik Opposition leader, Mr. Nuri, in June 1997, under the auspices of the United Nations. After years of fighting, this period of transition has been a difficult one, and several serious

crises have occurred along the way. Nevertheless, the Tajik parties managed to overcome the obstacles and to put their country on the path to national reconciliation and peace.

As the Secretary-General states in his report, the successful completion of this transition period marks a significant achievement in which the United Nations and UNMOT have played an important part. At the same time, it must be recognized that much remains to be done to consolidate the process of national reconciliation in Tajikistan. President Rakhmonov, in discussions with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrov, confirmed the need to establish a post-conflict peace-building office following the withdrawal of UNMOT upon the expiration of its mandate on 15 May. President Rakhmonov emphasized that the United Nations job-creation projects were an example of how the international community could contribute to peace consolidation, as it had done in the Karategin valley, by shifting attitudes and mentalities from confrontation to reconciliation. President Rakhmonov also stressed the need to reduce the strength of the armed forces through demobilization programmes, which could be supported by the international community through the proposed post-UNMOT presence.

**Mr. Granovsky** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me thank the Secretary-General for his interim report to the Security Council on the situation in Tajikistan (S/2000/214), which includes important assessments of developments in that country. We are grateful also to the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, for his thorough briefing and his introduction of the report, as well as for his useful comments on the item before us today.

The Russian Federation shares the view that the 27 February 2000 elections to the lower house of the new parliament were in many ways a landmark event, and that the overall assessment of the election campaign is a positive one.

We hear a great deal about the fact that there were a number of violations and shortcomings during the preparation and holding of the elections. Should we turn a blind eye to this? Of course not. We hope that Tajikistan will take note of the recommendations of the international observers and that these will be incorporated into the conduct of the elections to the upper house of the Republic's parliament, which are to take place in a few days' time. But it is not entirely justified to apply high international democratic standards to Tajikistan, which has just emerged from a protracted internal conflict. It is only natural that there should be some rough edges on the first free multi-party elections ever conducted in a country that is in a period of transition from civil war to national concord. As the saying goes, we must not fail to see the wood for the trees.

Deficiencies in the conduct of the elections should not eclipse the main point: their political significance as an important milestone marking the imminent completion of the implementation of the document signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997: the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. The very fact that the elections were held is significant. It is a unique achievement that they took place and that the political parties of former belligerents in the inter-Tajik conflict participated in them. This is to the credit not only of the former participants in the armed conflict, but also of the entire international community, which under the auspices of the United Nations has provided dynamic assistance to advance the peace process in Tajikistan.

Nor is there any doubt that the elections were an important step in the democratic development of Tajikistan and in the establishment of civil society in that country. On the whole, the elections unfolded in a free atmosphere, without any serious acts of violence. We take note of the pluralistic nature of the elections, reflected in the participation of six political parties as well as a number of independent candidates. As a result of the elections, a permanent bicameral professional parliament will be established. Nearly all members of parliament have now been replaced, and the percentage of civilian members has grown along with the number of women deputies. In other words, we are quite simply witnessing the progress of Tajikistan towards the formation of a multi-party political system; democratically elected parliamentarians will maintain the momentum.

We believe that Tajikistan has every chance of becoming a positive example of United Nations peacekeeping and conflict resolution. We are convinced that the Organization should continue to provide assistance in the consolidation of peace in Tajikistan. Particularly worthy of support is the idea of establishing in Tajikistan, when the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan has concluded its activities, a United Nations office to help with post-conflict peace-building, with the primary task of coordinating international efforts to revive and develop the economic and social life of Tajikistan.

**Mr. Minton** (United States of America): My delegation too welcomes the recent parliamentary elections, which were held in Tajikistan in a violence-free environment. We think this is a significant step towards the realization of democracy in that country. These elections were, of course, the first-ever multi-party parliamentary elections in the country, and we recognize that, as such, they constitute a milestone in the implementation of the 1997 Moscow accords that ended Tajikistan's civil war. As has been noted by Mr. Annabi, however, there were some significant shortcomings in the way the process was implemented.

A Joint Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations reported on these problems during the election period, and I think all observers are aware of them. However, we believe that with serious work by the Government these irregularities can certainly be overcome in future elections as this process proceeds.

Consequently we wish to encourage the Government of Tajikistan to correct these flaws during the 23 March elections to the upper house. At the same time, we believe that the implementation of the election process, as I said, is highly significant, and a good start has been made with this process. We believe that implementation so far should allow Tajikistan to move forward in the future towards a fuller realization of the democratic processes to which its Government has committed the country. We hope that the Government in particular, as this process proceeds, will ensure that all groups within the country feel that they have a voice, as well as a stake, in the political system of the country.

Since the period of transition stipulated in the peace accords will come to an end with these parliamentary elections, we agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that the process which the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was created to support is now over. Therefore, my delegation believes that UNMOT should be terminated when its mandate expires on 15 May.

At the same time, however, we look forward to hearing from the Secretary-General about follow-on measures that will enable Tajikistan to embark upon post-conflict peace-building. We are fully ready to be supportive of those measures.

As during previous mid-mandate reviews for UNMOT, my delegation could support, as I said, a presidential statement along the lines proposed by the Russian delegation.

**Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi** (Namibia): We too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Tajikistan. We also thank Mr. Annabi for the introductory remarks he has made.

Tajikistan has had its first-ever multi-party elections. We believe that this in itself is a very significant and major achievement. We do take serious note of the content of paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's report. However, in my delegation's view, the weaknesses in the elections legislation can only be improved and perfected over time, and it is our hope that the Tajik Government will move in this direction.

Democratization is a process; it does not take root with one election, nor with two. It also depends on many other aspects. We are encouraged, however, that despite the obstacles, the Tajik parties have embarked on the path to reconciliation and democracy. We believe that what is very important and crucial at this time is for all of us to nurture this fledgling democracy by providing assistance to the Tajik Government.

In this context, and with regard to the possible role to be played by the United Nations during the post-conflict peace-building and consolidation period, my delegation appreciates the ongoing consultations with the Government of Tajikistan. We look forward to further information from the Secretary-General in this regard.

We further agree with the Secretary-General that the fact that the transition period envisaged in the General Agreement is coming to a close is a significant achievement. We share his assessment regarding the commendable role that the United Nations has played in the third process. Our particular praise also goes to the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for its instrumental role in ensuring the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement.

Finally, my delegation agrees with the elements of the statement proposed by the Russian delegation.

**Mr. Doutriaux** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join the delegations that have already spoken in thanking Mr. Annabi for his oral briefing and the Secretariat for the report on the situation in Tajikistan.

Stability in Tajikistan is important not only for the Tajik people but also for the whole of the region. We note that in particularly difficult and often dangerous conditions, the United Nations, with the assistance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), has been able to set Tajikistan on the path of concord and democracy.

Of course, all is not perfect, far from it; much remains to be done. As Mr. Annabi has noted, the legislative elections were marked by incidents, and the reintegration of combatants from the opposition side still requires a great deal of time and effort. However, we should salute the progress that has been made. Tajikistan has had its first-ever multi-party elections, and the great majority of the deputies are newcomers who are not from the military but from professional or political circles. The proportion of women in the new Assembly has risen from 2.5 to 15 per cent. In short, this new parliament could become a driving force in the democratic process.

While these elections represented a major step forward in the implementation of the peace agreement, the military protocol has not been fully implemented, in particular the provisions regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. Thus we need to persist in the action under way, while adapting it to the new conditions prevailing in Tajikistan. This is why France supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to create a small United Nations office, similar to those that the United Nations established in the Central African Republic and in Guinea-Bissau.

In this context we would be glad to be informed by the Secretariat, at the appropriate moment, about the nature of the discussions with the Tajik authorities regarding the establishment of this office, the modalities for its establishment, the exact mandate it will be given and, in particular, the question of coordination between the United Nations and the OSCE offices in Tajikistan.

Finally, my country fully supports the statement that Russia has proposed for you, Sir, to read following this meeting of the Council.

Let me just add that the transition of the United Nations presence in Tajikistan from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs will be another example of a smooth transition, much like what was very recently adopted for the Central African Republic and for Haiti.

**Mr. Chen Xu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): To begin we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his additional briefing.

The peace process of Tajikistan has yielded significant progress. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) has become another success story. This shows that the political will of the parties concerned and the forceful support of the international community are the indispensable prerequisites for any success in peacekeeping operations.

As was pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, the peace process in Tajikistan has not been a smooth one. During the process there were grave crises. However, the Government and political parties of Tajikistan demonstrated their commitment to the peace agreement, solved their differences through dialogue, overcame many obstacles and eventually embarked on the path towards national reconciliation and democracy. This is particularly precious for the people of Tajikistan, who suffered through many years of war.

The Chinese delegation places great value on the enormous efforts made by the international community in general, and by the United Nations, the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations and Russia in particular. As the mandate of UNMOT will be expiring soon, we support the Secretary-General in his continued consultations with the Government of Tajikistan aimed at exploring what role the United Nations can play in the process of post-conflict peace-building and consolidation.

Before concluding, the Chinese delegation would like to state that it supports the draft presidential statement proposed by the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Cappagli** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina welcomes the fact that the situation in Tajikistan is being addressed in the form of a briefing open to interested delegations. We should also like to express our gratitude for the update provided by the Secretariat, in the person of Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi, and for the interim report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2000/214.

We should like to express particular appreciation for the important work carried out by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) since its creation in 1994. It is worth noting that, after years of

fighting, the transition period provided for in the General Agreement has been completed, and that the United Nations, in the form of UNMOT, has played an essential role in this process.

The international community has just witnessed the holding of the first multi-party elections in the history of Tajikistan. It is true that those elections were far from exemplary in terms of transparency and legitimacy. However, if this electoral event is viewed in the context of the history of Tajikistan, which has been marked by struggle, grave crises, bans on opposition parties and the absence of minimal political guarantees, the recent parliamentary elections can be interpreted only as an encouraging milestone in that country's path towards democracy.

Argentina believes that the fundamental objective of turning Tajikistan towards national reconciliation and democratization has been achieved, although it also agrees with the Secretary-General's assessment, expressed in paragraph 17 of his interim report, that much remains to be done. For this reason, we share his concern that there are still too many men under arms, and we also hope that the job creation projects for former combatants will receive the requisite international financing.

We endorse the Secretary-General's proposal that, at the end of its mandate on 15 May, UNMOT be replaced by a small office for post-conflict peace-building purposes. We believe that in that way the United Nations presence in Tajikistan will be assured during this new stage of democracy-building.

In conclusion, I should like to say that we, too, support the draft presidential statement proposed by Russia, which has been circulated to the members of the Council.

**Mr. Harrison** (United Kingdom): My delegation would like to join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his report, and also in thanking Mr. Annabi for his very clear briefing at the beginning of this meeting.

We are pleased that the transition period in Tajikistan is drawing to a close. The main task for us all now is to consolidate the peace and avoid any future breakdown of the arrangements that have been successfully put in place. We are also pleased that the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) has provided critical support to the peace process, and we are pleased that the elections took place successfully, as noted by the Joint Electoral Observation Mission (JEOM). They were the first multi-party elections to take place in an atmosphere free of violence, which represents a real landmark in the history of Tajikistan. Nevertheless, we are concerned that the elections failed to meet the minimum democratic standards for equal, free, transparent and accountable elections, and we urge the Government, the Parliament and all political forces in Tajikistan to work towards fully fair and free elections in the future.

We also await with interest the outcome of the Secretary-General's consultations with the Government of Tajikistan on a follow-on political presence. We would not wish to prejudge the results of these discussions, but we do support the Secretary-General's conclusion that it is important for the international community to remain engaged in Tajikistan.

**Mr. Ward** (Jamaica): We join in thanking the Secretary-General for his interim report, and Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

My delegation welcomes the recent holding of parliamentary elections in Tajikistan, as this represents an important step in the democratization process. The resolution of the conflict and the establishment of peace in Tajikistan constitute an important step towards stability in Central Asia. The inclusion of the different parties in the election process signals the commitment of the people and the Government of Tajikistan to the creation of a multi-party democracy.

We note that the electoral process was not without problems. The report of the Secretary-General points to a number of shortcomings in the electoral law and process, and we hope that steps can be taken to correct these inadequacies. We recognize the need to make allowances for the transitional process that has taken place in Tajikistan. Improvements in the electoral process should be undertaken as a matter of priority. It is important that the electoral process be one of legitimacy and integrity in order to secure peace and security for the people of Tajikistan. Existing political institutions must be strengthened to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the important task of governing, with the support of the Tajik people.

We commend the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for the success that it has achieved in implementing its mandate, in accordance with the provisions of the 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. My delegation also wishes to acknowledge the

contribution made by UNMOT and the United Nations/Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Joint Electoral Observer Mission in the recent elections, and we hope that their findings can be taken into account as we work towards a more transparent electoral process. My delegation looks forward to the holding of elections for the upper house, scheduled for Thursday, 23 March.

We need to move quickly to cement the gains made in the peace process and to foster greater democracy in the region. The Secretary-General has advised us of his intention to withdraw UNMOT when its mandate expires on 15 May. In the light of the positive developments in Tajikistan, therefore, we must now turn our attention to the future role of the United Nations. We agree that there is still much to be done.

A change in the role of the United Nations is inevitable, as we seek to move towards peace-building. We support the intention of the Secretary-General to consult with Tajikistan in that regard. A peace-building United Nations mission after the withdrawal of UNMOT is essential, in order to prevent a return to conditions which foster conflict and to facilitate national reconciliation and the creation of a sustainable system of government.

We look forward to working with all concerned towards a peace-building agenda for Tajikistan, one that includes all the factors we have outlined, as we build on the work done to bring lasting peace and security to the people of Tajikistan.

Finally, we support the elements of the presidential statement proposed by the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Mohammad Kamal** (Malaysia): Like speakers before me, I too would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his briefing, and to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his interim report, which we have before us.

We are indeed pleased with the significant progress in the peace process in Tajikistan. To put it briefly, the Tajik peace process is increasingly being recognized as one of the success stories that this Organization is associated with. The United Nations has played a crucial role in that process through the deployment of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and the active involvement of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative. The constructive role of the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations, which includes the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, is similarly instrumental to that success. We commend them all for their efforts. But most importantly, all parties in Tajikistan — the Government, other political forces and the people alike — must be congratulated on their commitment and determination to achieve peace and promote national reconciliation after the devastating civil war in that country.

The holding of the first multi-party parliamentary elections last month, in an atmosphere free of violence, was another important step forward towards establishing lasting peace and stability in Tajikistan. That election, despite the noted shortcomings, was crucial as the beginning of democratic development in the country. By the same token, it will be crucial for similar differences to be addressed and avoided in the future.

We agree with the Secretary-General's observation in his report that there are still too many men under arms, and we fully support the efforts to encourage them to return to civilian life.

We strongly urge the Government and all political forces in Tajikistan to strengthen and consolidate the achievements that have been made so far, and to continue such efforts beyond the transition period envisaged in the General Agreement so that the peace process will be irreversible.

At the same time, we also believe that the international community, and particularly the United Nations, should remain engaged in Tajikistan, especially in providing comprehensive assistance for the social, economic and democratic reforms. In this regard, we look forward to details of the Secretary-General's proposal on the possible role of the Organization following the closure of the present United Nations peacekeeping Mission, UNMOT, in May.

In conclusion, we also wish to express our support for the draft presidential statement on Tajikistan that is before us. In this regard, we wish to thank the Russian delegation for its initiative.

**Mr. Ben Mustapha** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General. We thank him for the information he gave us and for making himself available to the Council.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleague, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, who is an eminent diplomat and friend with whom I had the privilege to work in Tunis and in Paris, where I was able to appreciate his great human and professional qualities. I would like to assure him of our full readiness to continue to work with him and his delegation, as we did with his predecessor, Ambassador Dejammet.

Tunisia has taken note of the holding of the first pluralistic and democratic elections in Tajikistan. We salute the role played in this regard by the Joint Electoral Observation Mission of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As the Secretary-General stressed in his report, and as the recent elections have shown, the transition to a stable democratic regime has barely begun. It is important in this connection for the international community to continue to lend the necessary assistance to guarantee the continuity of the democratic process in that country. Some sort of ongoing United Nations presence will make it possible to preserve the gains made and to consolidate the process of national reconciliation in Tajikistan. Despite the difficulties and tensions that have accompanied the entire transition period, the United Nations, the Contact Group and other actors have constantly promoted and helped the Tajik parties overcome obstacles in order to enable their country to embark upon the part of reconciliation and democracy.

Tunisia would like to express its satisfaction with the role played by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), and with the goodwill of all the parties near and far that have participated in helping make the Mission a success. My country agrees with the decision of the Secretary-General to terminate the United Nations Mission in Tajikistan. Tajikistan must shoulder its responsibilities, with the assistance of the international community, and the international community should closely follow the evolution of the situation on the ground in order to guarantee the establishment of lasting stability and democracy.

The role of the United Nations in the post-UNMOT period will continue to be very important, particularly as long as the United Nations continues to assist Tajikistan in all aspects of peace-building, especially in the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life and in income-generating activities that are of economic and social benefit. We encourage the authorities of Tajikistan to continue consultations with the United Nations to define the role that can be played by the Organization in future stages to consolidate peace in Tajikistan.

**Mr. Yel'chenko** (Ukraine): Since I did not participate in the discussion during the morning meeting, I would also like to join my colleagues who extended their warm welcome to Ambassador Levitte of France. We wish him every success in all his endeavours at the United Nations in the years to come.

I would like to thank Mr. Annabi for the briefing on the latest developments in Tajikistan, and to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his interim report. We also welcome the participation in our meeting of Ambassador Alimov of Tajikistan.

The recent parliamentary elections in Tajikistan have become a crucial event in the life of that country and therefore deserve the full attention of the Security Council. Those elections mark the last major step in the transitional period outlined in the June 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, which was signed between the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Those elections draw a line under one of the most difficult conflicts in the territories of the newly independent States that re-emerged on the world political map. After long years of fighting, the Tajik parties managed to come to a peaceful solution and to eventual reconciliation.

Peaceful reconciliation became possible thanks to the political will and tireless and persistent efforts of the Tajik parties themselves, the President of Tajikistan, friendly neighbouring countries and the entire international community, in particular the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The parliamentary elections — the first multi-party ones in the history of the country — were held on the basis of the new law adopted following the national referendum in September 1999.

As outlined in the joint statement issued by the OSCE and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIR) on the parliamentary elections in Tajikistan, the most significant accomplishment of this peace-building step was the inclusion of the former warring parties and others in the electoral process. It is noteworthy that for the first time the military opposition, which had relied on its military force, chose to say farewell to arms and to seek by political means its place in civil society and in the power structures.

In our view, this remarkable decision attests to the fact that Tajik society has taken the road to democracy and should be regarded as a solid basis for the further development of the society. It would be no exaggeration to say that this is an significant event that will have a positive impact on the security environment of the entire region of Central Asia.

It should be noted that the international community has taken a significant interest in this event. The United Nations and OSCE Joint Electoral Observation Mission to Tajikistan provided more than 80 observers, who visited some 300 polling stations across Tajikistan. We are fully aware of the critical assessments regarding certain shortcomings observed by the international monitors during the elections. However, we should bear in mind the fact that these took place in a country which went through years of armed conflict and is now taking its first steps on the road towards democracy. We have no doubt that those findings will be taken seriously by the leadership of the Republic of Tajikistan.

As the Secretary-General rightly noted in paragraph 17 of his report (S/2000/214), "the move towards a stable democracy has only just begun". It is of crucial importance that the international community continue to support Tajikistan. Ukraine, as a country with longstanding traditions of friendship with Tajikistan, will actively participate in this process.

We also deem it essential that a United Nations post-conflict peace-building office be established in Tajikistan. We would like to commend the men and women of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) staff for their dedicated work during the course of this year, sometimes under extremely difficult conditions, which ensured the successful implementation of the task entrusted to them by the international community. We are proud of the fact that Ukrainian nationals have made a concrete contribution to the work of the Mission.

Finally, we support the draft presidential statement proposed by the delegation of the Russian Federation and negotiated today.

**Mr. Hamer** (Netherlands):I too thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his introduction of the Secretary-General's report and for the additional information he has provided.

Although the overall progress in the peace process is encouraging, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General's conclusion that the move towards a stable democracy has only just begun. While the holding of the presidential and parliamentary elections was a significant step in the development of democratic institutions, the elections themselves were marred by significant flaws.

The presidential elections last November were not monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), because they failed to meet the standards set by that organization. The parliamentary elections on 27 February were the country's first multi-party elections, but serious shortcomings in those elections have led the Joint Electoral Observation Mission to express serious doubts concerning the integrity of the election results.

Despite these undeniable shortcomings, the trend over the past few months has been encouraging. It is precisely because much remains to be done in the way of further democratization that the international community must remain engaged in that process. That is why the Netherlands fully endorses the Secretary-General's proposal concerning a further role for the United Nations in Tajikistan after the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT).

Finally, we call on the Tajik authorities to ensure that the forthcoming elections to the National Assembly proceed in a free, fair and transparent manner.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Bangladesh.

My delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his briefing and his introduction of the interim report of the Secretary-General.

The holding of parliamentary elections on 27 February was a significant step forward for Tajikistan, though there were a number of areas in which the electoral process did not meet with the full satisfaction of the international community. In considering the outcome, a number of points must be borne in mind.

First, this was the first multi-party, pluralistic election in Tajikistan, and it included participation by former warring parties. Secondly, the voter turnout was very good — 93 per cent. And thirdly, the fact that the elections were held without any violent incidents halting the process was itself a success.

The deficiencies in the electoral process were not entirely unexpected. The Joint Electoral Observation Mission of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was deployed despite shortcomings in the electoral laws. It was present not only to observe the process, but also to offer constructive engagement. The country has emerged from a prolonged and difficult conflict situation, and we consider these elections as a building-block phase in the peace process and the development of democracy in the country.

The holding of elections, even if flawless, cannot guarantee the consolidation of democracy. The elections were only a starting point in a long journey in the quest for national reconciliation and democratic institution-building. The process could be disrupted if not properly nurtured. The Government of Tajikistan and the international community should focus on carrying this process forward.

With regard to the reintegration of opposition fighters, let me say that in order to consolidate the peace process, the reintegration of ex-combatants into society should be given a high priority. It cannot be viewed as a sequential event which will follow their disarmament. The two processes are intertwined. The positive results achieved in the reintegration of the former fighters into society will mobilize those still holding on to weapons and encourage them to surrender those arms.

The Secretary-General's report notes that in Tajikistan there are still too many men under arms. They should be offered meaningful and productive economic opportunities. Otherwise, the ex-combatants, with their illegal arms, will be a threat to the peace and security of society.

More projects geared to job creation should be undertaken, and funding should be made available for them. The only such project, in the Karategin Valley, was interrupted by the onset of winter. It should receive more attention and be resumed soon.

Finally, on the way ahead, the international community has a responsibility to see that the gains achieved in Tajikistan are not lost and that interest does not wane after the acute phase of the conflict is over. The world community should come forward and provide assistance to help this fledgling democracy take root and to create opportunities for the people to see hope in their future.

We have noted from the Secretary-General's report that he will be consulting the Tajik Government about the possible role of the United Nations in post-conflict peace-building and will inform the Council about the outcome of his consultations. It might be worthwhile for the Council to consider some viable and convincing options for the future involvement of the United Nations in Tajikistan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of Tajikistan has asked for the floor, and I now call on him.

**Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to take this opportunity first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your exercise of your very important duties as President of the Security Council for March and to sincerely wish you every success in your difficult and very responsible job.

Allow me also to express gratitude for the important proposals and comments made during this exchange of views on the report submitted by the Secretary-General under this agenda item on the situation in Tajikistan. Every comment and proposal made here is of great value to us and my Government will certainly study them with care.

Since the submission in November 1999 of the previous report of the Secretary-General on Tajikistan, major political events have taken place in Tajik society. Decisive steps have been taken to consolidate all the achievements made during the almost three-year peace process in my country. For the first time in the history of newly independent Tajikistan, pluralistic, multiparty elections were held. For us, this was not just another routine election campaign. The elections were a very serious test of the strength of the peace process unfolding under United Nations auspices and brought it to the conclusion envisaged in the General Agreement signed in Moscow in June 1997.

This was a very serious, qualitatively new step towards the further democratization of our society. We can say in all certainty that this democratic breakthrough was truly won by the suffering of the people of Tajikistan. For the first time in the country's history, six political parties took part in the establishment of the representative organs through elections and every mandate in the various constituencies was contested, on average, by five candidates; in some, there were as many

as 10. All of this took place not long after the recent civil conflict in my country.

Preparations for and the holding of the elections in a free, democratic atmosphere were not a victory solely for our burgeoning Tajik democracy as a whole. We may candidly and, in our opinion, must attribute it to each individual participant in this process, from the rank-and-file voter to the political parties and movements. It is important to note that the elections took place in accordance with the law, reflecting the current state of Tajik society. This law was adopted on the basis of the amendments to the country's Constitution endorsed in the course of the popular referendum.

We consider the main achievement of the elections to be the fact that the Tajik people themselves decided the direction our society should take in the twenty-first century. This direction can be characterized by the following central points.

Tajikistan is resolutely moving towards the development of a democratic, secular and pluralistic society that respects the views of the people and observes fundamental human rights and freedoms. To use the image cited by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, the outcome of the parliamentary elections has cemented the achievements of the peace process and laid solid foundations for the sustainable development of the country.

We are grateful to the Security Council, the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations for the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan for their constant attention to our problems, assistance and support, which we have appreciated, appreciate and, I am sure, will continue to appreciate in the future.

Tajikistan now has special need of all kinds of international support. We have reason to hope that this support will grow. This hope is bolstered by the concerned and active work being undertaken in our country by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and many other specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Moreover, the country's transition to the peaceful path of development and the socio-economic reforms being carried out by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan are gradually leading to increased confidence in us on the part of investors, who are devoting growing attention to the opportunities offered them by participation in the revival and development of our country.

We believe that the Secretary-General will soon submit recommendations on the new role of the United Nations in Tajikistan once UNMOT fulfils its mandate. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is prepared to continue to cooperate with the United Nations on the basis and in development of the joint experience we have gained in leading the country out of a most difficult internal conflict. We feel that this experience deserves a thorough analysis and assimilation. It should help enhance the United Nations authority and serve the interests of all its States Members. We hope that we still have some time to address this question very seriously.

Right now, it is important to identify in a precise and balanced manner the United Nations tasks at this new phase in the development of the situation in Tajikistan. It is important to bear in mind the depth of the respect of the Tajik people for the people in blue helmets and to plan United Nations activities so as to further deepen that respect.

We believe that the Secretary-General, in preparing his proposals, will base himself on the real needs of our country, whose peace and stability can best be consolidated by helping to revive and develop the socio-economic sphere.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to Mr. Annabi to comment on the statements made so far.

**Mr. Annabi**: There is not much to add. Perhaps I could simply add that the Special Representative, together with colleagues from the Department of Political Affairs, met yesterday with President Rakhmonov to discuss the follow-on presence of the United Nations in Tajikistan. During those discussions, the President confirmed his support for this follow-on presence.

The Secretary-General will now be preparing recommendations and precise terms of reference for this follow-on presence, which will be brought to the attention of the Council in due course.

**The President:** There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will take place immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*